Time and Space in the Myth of Byblis and Caunus[1]

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The plot of the myth of Byblis can be summarized as follows: Byblis and Caunus are sister and brother and one of them falls in love with the other - in some versions it is Caunus, whereas in others it is Byblis. Either way, the result is the departure of Caunus, who ends up founding a city, and Byblis' death originating a water source that will bear her name. The first treatment of the myth appears, in a fragmentary form, in Hellenistic poetry, but it must have been known at least since the fourth century BCE, when Aristotle uses the expression Καύνιος ἔρως to refer to illicit loves.[2] The tale must have become quite popular from Hellenistic times onwards, for we can find it in the poetic works of Apollonius Rhodius, Nicaenetus, Nicander, Ovid and Nonnus of Pannopolis,[3] and it is also narrated by three Imperial mythographers, Parthenius, Conon and Antoninus Liberalis.[4] The myth is also mentioned by Stephanus Byzantinus, Diogenianus and the scholia to Theocritus.[5]

In her book on Hellenistic literature, Kathryn Gutzwiller points out that tales about passion between sister and brother were a usual topic in Hellenistic literature, a

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[2] Arist. *Rh*. 1402b3. See also Diog. Laert. 5.71.1; Suda κ 1138; Eust. in Dionys. Per. 533.9. Cf. Hsch. κ 1915.

[3] Artistocritus *FGrH* 493 F 1; Ap. Rhod. fr. F5 P.; Nicaenetus *Coll. Alex*. F1 P.; Nicaenetus fr. F46 G-S.

[4] Conon, *Narr*. 2; Parth. *Amat. narr*. 11; Ov. *Met*. 9.450-665; Ant. Lib. 30; Nonnus *Dion*. 13.548-561.

[5] Schol. Theoc. *Id*. 7.115c; Diogenian. 5.71; Steph. Byz. s.v. Καῦνος.

likely reaction to the Ptolemaic marriage between siblings, either against or in favour of it.[6] She reckons that the story on Biblys and Caunus, who were linked to Miletus, was meant to justify the sibling marriage by Mausolus, the carian satrap who ruled between the 377/376 and the 353 and who had married his sister Artemisia.[7] However, I will try to show in this paper that several elements in the myth are meant to disapprove of incest rather than to a validate it.[8] In order to do this, I will focus the symbolism of time and especially of space in the version of Parthenius of Nicaea's *Erotica Pathemata*, for it provides a text that integrates different versions of the myth, although I will of course also refer to other versions when necessary.

The *Erotica Pathemata*, from the first century BCE, is a collection of stories about unfortunate passions, which are usually classified as Hellenistic mythographical prose, and provides a set of short narrations on erotic myths organised in independent chapters.[9] These narrations cannot be seen as mere summaries of former material and scholars have recently vindicated the aesthetic value of this prose and its intimate relation to poetry.[10] Indeed, Parthenius, a poet himself, dedicated the work to his friend Cornelius Gallus, a poet as well, and declared that the stories are meant to

[6] Gutzwiller 2007, 126-127.

[7] On Mausolus see Hornblower 1982.

[8] On incest in the Greek culture see Bremmer 1987, 41-59; in this myth see Nagle 1983, 301-315.

[9] On Parthenius see Lightfoot 1999; Biraud-Voisin-Zucker 2008; Cuartero 1982; Calderón Dorda 1988. On the *Erotica Pathemata* as a mythographical work see Pellizer 1993, 291-292; Lightfoot 1999, 215-282; Higbie 2007, 237-254.

[10] Gallé Cejudo 2013, 247-275.

provide inspiration for poetical composition.[11] As a matter of fact, several lines of two different poems are quoted in the chapter on Byblis and Caunus. The first poet to be cited is Nicaenetus and the transmitted verses probably belong to the hexametric poem titled *Lyrcus*.[12] Parthenius also quotes some lines from his own poetic treatment. The two fragments are quoted in order to illustrate two different versions of the myth, as Parthenius himself points out. Since it is a short text, I quote the complete chapter:[13]

> Περὶ Βυβλίδος
>
> Ἱστορεῖ Ἀριστόκριτος περὶ Μιλήτου καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος ὁ Ῥόδιος Καύνου κτίσει.
>
> Περὶ δὲ Καύνου καὶ Βυβλίδος, τῶν Μιλήτου παίδων, διαφόρως ἱστορεῖται. Νικαίνετος μὲν γάρ φησι τὸν Καῦνον ἐρασθέντα τῆς ἀδελφῆς, ὡς οὐκ ἔληγε [5]
> τοῦ πάθους, ἀπολιπεῖντὴν οἰκίαν καὶ ὁδεύσαντα πόρρωτῆς οἰκείας χώρας πόλιν τε κτίσαι καὶ τοὺς ἀπεσκεδασμένους τότε Ἴωνας ἐνοικίσαι.λέγει δὲ ἔπεσι τοῖσδε·
>
> αὐτὰρ ὅ γε προτέρωσε κιὼν Οἰκούσιον ἄστυ
>
> κτίσσατο, Τραγασίην δὲ Κελαινέος ἤγετο παῖδα
>
> ἥ οἱ Καῦνον ἔτικτεν ἀεὶ φιλέοντα θέμιστας. 10

[11] The epistolographical introduction is most probably a rhetorical exercise than an actual letter, as Lightfoot warns (1999, 223-224), for epistolary prefaces were more honorific than utilitarian at their time. However, it is still adressed to Cornelius Gallus, a poet.

[12] For an edition of Nicaenetus' fragments see Powell 1925 (1970), 1-2. The manchette in the margin of Parthenius' manuscript quote Aristocritus and Apollonius Rhodius but not Nicaenetus. On the manchetes see Papathomopulos 1968, the first to use that term for the notes on authorities in the manuscript which transmits Parthenius' and Antoninus Liberalis' works.

[13] I follow Lightfoot's text and translation, except for a passage from Nicaenetus' quotation (lines 13-15), for which I follow White's edition and interpretation (1982, 192).

γείνατο δὲ ῥαδαλῇς ἐναλίγκιον ἀρκεύθοισι

Βυβλίδα. τῆς ἤτοι ἀέκων ἠράσσατο Καῦνος.

βῆ δὲ φερένδιος φεύγων ὀφιώδεα Κύπρον,

καὶ Κάπρος ὑλιγενὲς καὶ Κάρια ἱρὰ λοετρά.

ἔνθ᾽ ἤτοι πτολίεθρον ἐδείματο πρῶτος Ἰώνων.

αὐτὴ δὲ γνωτὴ ὀλολυγόνος οἶτον ἔχουσα

Βυβλὶς ἀποπρὸ πυλῶν Καύνου ὠδύρατο νόστον.

οἱ δὲ πλείους τὴν Βυβλίδα φασὶν ἐρασθεῖσαν τοῦ Καύνου λόγους αὐτῷ προσφέρειν καὶ δεῖσθαι μὴ περιιδεῖν αὐτὴν εἰς πᾶν κακὸν προελθοῦσαν· ἀποστυγήσαντα δὲ οὕτως τὸν Καῦνον περαιωθῆναι εἰς τὴν τότε ὑπὸ [20] Λελέγων κατεχομένην γῆν, ἔνθα κρήνη Ἐχενηΐς, πόλιν τε κτίσαι τὴν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ κληθεῖσαν Καῦνον. τὴν δὲ ἄρα ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους μὴ ἀνιεμένην, πρὸς δὲ καὶ δοκοῦσαν αἰτίαν γεγονέναι Καύνῳ τῆς ἀπαλλαγῆς, ἀναψαμένην ἀπό τινος δρυὸς τὴν μίτραν ἐνθεῖναι τὸν τράχηλον. λέγεται δὲ καὶ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν οὕτως·

ἡ δ᾽ ὅτε δή <ῥ᾽> ὀλοοῖο κασιγνήτου νόον ἔγνω,

κλαῖεν ἀηδονίδων θαμινώτερον, αἵ τ᾽ ἐνὶ βήσσῃς

Σιθονίῳ κούρῳ πέρι μυρίον αἰάζουσιν.

καί ῥα κατὰ στυφελοῖο σαρωνίδος αὐτίκα μίτρην

ἁψαμένη δειρὴν ἐνεθήκατο· ταὶ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐκείνῃ

βεύδεα παρθενικαὶ Μιλησίδες ἐρρήξαντο.

φασὶ δέ τινες καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν δακρύων κρήνην ῥυῆναι ἀίδιον τὴν καλουμένην Βυβλίδα.

Various stories are told about Caunus and Byblis, the children of Miletus. Nicaenetus says that Caunus fell in love with his sister, and that when the passion did not abate he left his home and travelled far from his native land, founding a city and settling there the scattered Ionians. He says in the following hexameters:

But faring further on, the town of Oecous

He founded, took to wife Celaeneus' daughter

Tragasia, who bore him justice-loving Caunus.

But like the slender poplars was her girl –

Byblis, whom Caunus loved against his will.

And he went enduring midday, in flight to snaky Cyprus,

And to wooded Caprus, and to the holly streams of Caria.

There he, first of all the Ionians, built a city.

But Byblis shared the nightingale's sad fate:

Without the gates she mourned for Caunus gone.

Most, however, say that Byblis fell in love with Caunus and made overtures to him, begging him not to look on while she went through every sort of misery. But Caunus felt only loathing, and crossed over into the land at that time possessed by the Leleges, where there is a stream called Echeneis; and there he founded a city named Caunus after him. But as for her, her passion did not abate; and in addition, when she considered that she was the reason for Caunus' departure, she fastened her girdle to an oak tree and put her neck in it. Here is my own version of the story:

And once she knew her cruel's brother mind,

Her shrieks came thicker than the nightingales'

In woods, who ever mourn the Thracian lad.

Her girdle to a rugged oak she tied,

And laid her neck within. And over her

Milesian maidens rent their lovely robes.

Some also say that an everlasting stream flowed from her tears, and that the stream's name was Byblis.

The story on Byblis and Caunus is related several times, thus constituting an account that can be described as a manifold narrative. In fact, some scholars consider that the chapter should be seen as a practical example of Parthenius' poetics: he displays multiple versions of the same subject-matter, both poetical and prose, as a sort of exhibition of his working methodology.[14]

In the introduction – after the title and the manchette – ,[15] the first information provided is the genealogy of the siblings: their father is Miletus, the founder of the homonymous city.[16] This brief mention sets the space and time of the narration.[17] Indeed, all other versions of the myth begin with some genealogical information as

[14] Biraud, Voisan and Zucker 2008, 22-23.

[15] The manchettes are found in the margins of the manuscript. Papathomopoulos (1968, xi-xix) showed that they do not belong to the original text, but were inserted by the scribe of the manuscript.

[16] Apollod. 3.2.1; schol. Ap. Rhod. 1.185; Ant. Lib. 30.

[17] Genealogy has the purpose to set an individual chronological and geographically. It is a very common procedure in mythographical literature – Hecateus' work and some other fragmentary logographers' works were titled *Genealogies*. Genealogy also plays an important role in archaic epic – Homeric heroes state who their ancestors are when they meet each other; Hesiod uses it to order the cosmos and the divine forces. Indeed, it is a tool to organise the traditional material because it integrates the double aspects of space and time: it is, on one side, the expression of an individuals' kin relations projected on time and, on the other side, the expression of the location of a group – a family – within space, when many Greek cities' names are explained by the name of their founders. This is the case for Miletus, who is the mythical founder of the city in Asia Minor which bears his name, and the father of the siblings. On the genealogical order in doxography see Delattre 2006, 145-159. One can consider the use of genealogy as a chronotopic reference. On the concept of chronotope see Bakhtin 1981. On chronotopes in the Aeschylean tragedy see Seaford 2012.

well, and all agree that they were the children of Miletus.[18] The quoted verses of Nicaenetus also include a reference to the origin of the siblings, although Parthenius had already mentioned it in the prose introduction. The poetic fragment, however, offers a variant, for it presents their father not as the founder of Miletus but as the founder of the city of Oecous.[19] Some sources, indeed, identify Oecous with Miletus. Therefore, the choice of this toponym could be simply a poetical, possibly metrical, choice. However, the fact that Parthenius includes in the quotation the verses on the settlement of Oecous and the marriage to Tragasia strongly suggests that, on one hand, he considers this background information as belonging to the myth of Byblis and, on the other hand, that the variant provides additional details. In fact, a scholion to Dionysius Periegetes mentions a tradition according to which the hero Miletus founded first the city of Oecous, where he dedicated a temple to Aphrodite, and then his son Celadon founded Miletus.[20] According to this, Lightfoot surmises that Nicaenetus' version could reflect Oecous' desire to assert his priority (1999, 438).

[18] Conon *Narr*. 2; Ov. *Met*. 9.450-453, where Caunus and Byblis are twins; Ant. Lib. 30.2, also twins. Nonnus *Dion*. 13.546-549, 557-559 gives an aberrant version where Caunus is said to be brother of Miletus as well as brother of Byblis. On Nonnus see Hollis 1976, 142-150.

[19] Eponymy is a type of aetiology. On aetiology see Valverde 1989; Delattre 2009, 285-310.

[20] Schol. Dionys. Per. 825: Μίλητος δὲ τῶν ἐπιφανῶν τις ἦν ἐν Κρήτῃ, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ πόλις ἐκεῖ Μίλητος, ὃς Μίνωος ἐπιστρατεύσαντος ἀπάρας τῆς Κρήτης κατάγεται εἰς Λυδίαν τῆς Ἀσίας, οὗ οἰκήσας Οἰκοῦντα τὸν τόπον ὠνόμασε, καὶ ἱερὸν Ἀφροδίτης ἱδρύσατο. Γαμεῖ δὲ Δοίην τὴν Μαιάνδρου, ἀφ' οὗ ποταμὸς ἐν Καρίᾳ, καὶ ποιεῖ Κελάδωνα, Καῦνον, Βυβλίδα. Ὧν ὁ Καῦνος οὐ φέρων τὸν ἔρωτα τῆς ἀδελφῆς μετῴκισται εἰς Λυκίαν. Κελάδων δὲ ἄρξας Οἰκοῦντος τὸν πατέρα εἰς τὴν πλησίον νῆσον ἔθαψεν, οὗ καὶ αὐτὸς μετῳκίσθη κατὰ χρησμόν, καὶ Μίλητον αὐτὴν ὠνόμασεν. Γέφυρα δὲ διορίζει τὰ νῦν Οἰκοῦντα καὶ Μίλητον.

Also a scholium to Theocritus links Oecous with a temple to Aphrodite.[21] The scholiast interprets a problematic point of Theocritus' *Idyll* 7 (115-117 Gow):[22]

> ὔμμες δ' Ὑετίδος καὶ Βυβλίδος ἁδὺ λιπόντες
>
> νᾶμα καὶ Οἰκοῦντα, ξανθᾶς ἕδος αἰπὺ Διώνας,
>
> ὦ μάλοισιν Ἔρωτες ἐρευθομένοισιν ὁμοῖοι
>
> But do you leave the sweet stream of Hyetis and Byblis,
>
> and Oecus, that steep seat of Golden-haired Dione,
>
> ye Loves as rosy as apples

In line 116 the manuscripts read οἰκεῦντες, but the scholiast understood it as a toponym, Οἰκούντα. This reading is probably also to be found in a Vth century papyrus, where the ending -ντα is to be read and Οικευ is restored by the editors.[23] Hecker and Gow accordingly correct Theocritus' manuscript accepting the scholiast interpretation.[24] If this is right, it would provide evidence of the fact that Oecous was known as the place of Aphrodite's temple in Theocritean times. Regardless of wheter Miletus and Oecous are the same city or not, Huxley (1970, 253) pointed out that "from the testimonies it is evident that the spring Byblis, Oikous and the precinct of Aphrodite are all connected". One wonders, therefore, if the choice of Oecous in Nicaenetus was meant to evoke an association to Aphrodite,[25] for his audience would have been able to recognise this toponym as a reference to the goddess of love and

[21] Schol. Theoc. 7.115-118: Οἰκεῦντα: ἐν Μιλήτῳ τόπος, <ἔνθα> ἱερὸν Ἀφροδίτης.

[22] Transl. Gow 1950, 65.

[23] P. Oxy. 13.1618. Grenfell-Hunt 1919, 174.

[24] Gow 1950, 64.

[25] On the fragment of Nicaenetus see White 1982, 185-192.

sex. In other words, the variation might be aimed at bringing into the picture Aphrodite, whose power is exemplified within the story, since the myth of Byblis and Caunus is basically a story of unfortunate love. However, we must admit that the commentary of the scholiast is an explanation that can actually be inferred from the Idyll itself. Indeed, White (2007, 126) rejects the correction and favours the reading of the manuscript.[26] If we reject the correction together with White, the interpretation that Nicaenetus is alluding to Aphrodite loses strength, since the scholium could be of a much later composition. However, she does not take into account the fact that the papyrus reads also Οἰκοῦντα, which would show that at least in the Vth century this word would have been understood as a toponym. Furthermore, in the fragment of Nicaenetus, Aphrodite is once again alluded to by another toponym in line 12, Κύπρος, obelised by Lightfoot and corrected by Powell for φρικώδεα Κύπριν,[27] but accepted by White, whose interpretation of the passage I follow.[28] Indeed, Cyprus was

[26] She interprets the passage as follows: "But leave the sweet stream of Hyetis and Byblis, although you inhabit the steep seat of golden-haired Dione, Loves as rosy as apples".

[27] Following the idea that Caunus' was fleeing Aphrodite's wrath. Huxley (1970, 6) states that the incestuous passion was a punishment of the Goddess: "Kaunos was the victim of passion inspired by Aphrodite, who had a precinct at Oikous" (for the discussion see pp. 6-7). However, no version of the myth describes Caunus' love explicitly as Aphrodite's punishment, only this one suggests it.

[28] Several editors had obelised the passage, interpreting that the mentioned places are accusatives depending of the participle φεύγων. This syntax poses a problem, since we do not know why Caunus would escape from Cyprus. White showed that this is a misinterpretation of the regent verb of these accusatives, which are direction accusatives depending of βῆ.

an important centre of cult of the goddess and one of the islands which claimed to be her birth-land.[29]

Some attention should be given to another aspect of the toponym Oecous: the name of the city contains – or at least evokes – the same root found in the verb οἰκείω, "to inhabit", or the noun οἶκος, "home". Thus, the name of the father land of Byblis and Caunus would sound like 'Home', or something very close to it. As a matter of fact, in the different versions presented by Parthenius in this text, the idea of separation from the home land is expressed very sharply. Note that the wording of Parthenius' prose underlines that idea: ἀπολιπεῖν τὴν οἰκίαν καὶ ὁδεύσαντα πόρρω τῆς οἰκείας χώρας. Nicaenetus' version describes Caunus departure with the expression βῆ φεύγων ("went in flight") and he also describes Caunus' journey. The fact that Nicaenetus mentions the route, though in three synthetic verses,[30] slows down the narrative rhythm and increases the feeling of distance. Other versions of the myth also stress the importance of distance between the siblings. Indeed, in the second version provided by Parthenius (lines 19-21), Caunus also leaves (see infra). This is made extremely clear in Conon's version, which includes an episode on how Caunus, after erring for a while (πλανώμενος), arrived to Lycia, met Pronoe and was persuaded to marry her, and how one of their children founded the city called Caunus.[31] Hence, the

[29] Aphrodite is already related to Cyprus in the Homeric poems (*Il*. 5.440, 458, 883); and Hesiod (*Theog*. 188-206) and her name appears in early archaic Cypriot inscriptions (Cyrino 2010, 27-28). For an overview on the goddess see Pirenne-Delforge 2010, 3-16, esp. 9-12.

[30] Editors have postulated several lacunae in the verses which refer to Caunus' parcours. However, White 1982 showed that it is not necessary to postulate them, for the text as it is follows perfectly the Hellenistic allusive poetics.

[31] Καῦνος δὲ πλανώμενος εἰς Λυκίαν φθάνει, καὶ τούτῳ Προνόη (Ναΐς δ' ἦν αὕτη) ἀναδῦσα τοῦ ποταμοῦ τά τε συνενεχθέντα τῇ Βυβλίδι λέγει, ὡς ἐχρήσατο Ἔρωτι δικαστῇ, καὶ πείθει αὐτὸν αὐτῇ ἐπὶ

episode on Caunus' departure is expanded in comparison to Nicaenetus or Parthenius' versions.

Nicaenetus' description of Byblis lamenting her brother employs the term νόστος (line 16). Lightfoot comments that the word should be interpreted as "journey", not "journey home". However, in my opinion, it should be interpreted precisely as the concept of "journey home", because Byblis is longing for her brother to come back to Oecous, "Home". It would also play ironically with the idea that he will find a new home to settle far away. Furthermore, the reference to νόστος allows Nicaenetus to draw from the rich poetic tradition of the return of the Greek heroes after the war of Troy. By using this term, the poet would be subtly characterising Caunus as a 'war hero'. Indeed, he is metaphorically fighting a war while being dominated by his passions. But in opposition to the Homeric heroes who, after winning the war, go back home – though finding many troubles in their way or even death – the only way Caunus can win his war is precisely by not going back home but instead leaving it.

The structure of the narrative, thus, follows the pattern of the foundation myths: a hero commits a crime and therefore has to leave his city.[32] The passion felt by Caunus is, therefore, equated to a crime. Certainly, the way Nicaenetus' verses refer to

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τῷ τῆς χώρας λαβεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν, (καὶ γὰρ εἰς αὐτὴν ἀνῆπτο) συνοικῆσαι. For a commentary on Conon see Brown 2002.

[32] Indeed, Francese (2001, 138) pointed out that Parthenius' treatment of the incest theme focuses on "the desire as an erotic pathology" and defended that this was an innovation of the Nicaean author. One of his arguments is that the former treatments of the myth of Byblis and Caunus, from which only Nicaenetus and Apollonius Rhodius' fragments have been transmited, would have presented the incest in a non-erotic way, describing it as a crime or a trangression and subordinating the narrative to local history interests.

Caunus' passion suggests that it is seen as a transgression: Caunus is described as ἀεὶ φιλέοντα θέμιστας, and his passion as involuntary (ἀέκων). The origin of the incestuous passion is not specified in any version of the myth. In other traditions, though, love is a punishment sent by a divinity – and in fact, Huxley (1970, 6) interprets Nicaenetus' passage as meaning precisely that Caunus' love was sent by Aphrodite.[33] The indirect references to Aphrodite in the toponyms – Oecous, if we accept the correction, and Cyprus – suggest also the idea of divine punishment. We find this idea explicitly formulated in chapter 5 of the *Erotica Pathemata*, in which Parthenius says that Leucipus' desire for his daughter was a punishment from Aphrodite.[34] Be as it may, the important point is that the passion is depicted as negative and the consequence to such an inappropriate feeling is departure.

In the second version of the myth, Byblis' confession of her feelings justifies, from a narrative point of view, the fact that Caunus leaves the city (lines 17-18). Indeed, the pattern of the foundation myth no longer fits here, since the crime is now committed by Byblis and not by Caunus.[35] However, Caunus still has to leave. The brother's feelings in this version are described with the verb ἀποστυγήσαντα, "to hate deeply", precisely the opposite to what he felt in the former version.[36] As a consequence, he leaves. This expressed by a verb formed on the root of πέραιος, "on

[33] See n. 25. The desire that the Lemnian men felt for the Thracian women is described as a punishment from Aphrodite for neglecting her cult. See Apollod. 1.9.17-18 [114-115]; Hyg. *Fab*. 15; *BNJ* 12 F 14 (= schol. *Il*. 7.467). Phaidras' passion for Hyppolitus is also explained as a punishment sent by Aphrodite against the boy due to his rejection of sexual love: Eur. *Hipp*. 1-57.

[34] Parth. 5.2: κατὰ μῆνιν Ἀφροδίτης εἰς ἔρωτα ἀφικόμενος τῆς ἀδελφῆς.

[35] That the passion is viewed as crime is clear in Byblis' shame in the confession. Antoninus' version, mentioned above, clearly explains that she hid form the parents.

[36] Lightfoot (1999, 437) notes that ἀποστυγήσαντα describes an "empahtic rejection".

the further side", expressing the idea of separation in a very definite and strong way. Thus, he crosses over to the land of the Leleges, a generic designation for early inhabitants of Asia Minor. The utter separation of Caunus is repeated again when Parthenius reformulates his departure from Byblis' point of view in his prose version (lines 21-22): she realises that she was the reason of Caunus' escape, expressed this time by the term ἀπαλλαγῆς, "release", as if he would be set free from her passion. The word can even be a synonym of "death".[37]

On the other hand, Byblis also leaves the house or the city in both versions of the myth, even though in the first version she is not guilty of anything. Her departure is not referred to in Parthenius' first part in prose, but it is explicitly mentioned in Nicaenetus' quotation: Βυβλὶς ἀποπρὸ πυλῶν Καύνου ὠδύρατο νόστον. She mourns Caunus "at the doors", of the city, we must infer. The image of the girl crying at the doors strongly reminds the Hellenistic *topos* of the *paraclausithyron*, the lament for the lover at the door of the loved one.[38] One wonders if this poem could have triggered the version of the myth in which it was Byblis the one in love with her brother, or Conon's version where the love is mutual.

Thus, Byblis leaves the πόλις, the civilised world, in a sort of social exile. Her separation from home is explicitly expressed in Conon's version, where she leaves the "paternal house" and "wanders through a very lonely place" or through "the wilderness".[39] Clearly, she is no longer within civilised society. This idea is also

[37] Xen. *Cyr*. 5.1.13; Theophr. *Hist. pl*. 9.8.3. In Parthenius' poetic version (line 24) Byblis realises of Caunus' νόον, mind, purpose, but also heart or feelings, emphasising the pathetic aspect of the story. Byblis sorrow would be caused by the fact that he did not love her back, more than by his departure.

[38] About the paraclausithyron see Canter 1920, 355-368; Copley 1940, 52-61; Copley 1956; Cummings 1996.

[39] Conon *Narr*. 2: ἡ Βυβλὶς ἐκλείπει καὶ αὐτὴ τὴν πατρῴαν οἰκίαν, καὶ πολλὴν ἐρημίαν πλανηθεῖσα.

conveyed by the fact that she ends up giving place to a water source – mentioned in all versions – a geographical element which belongs to nature. Incorporation to the natural world would be also suggested by Nicaenetus' αὐτὴ δὲ γνωτὴ ὀλολυγόνος οἶτον ἔχουσα, which seems to imply that Byblis undergoes a metamorphosis into a nightingale.[40] This idea of integration in the wilderness is brought to an extreme by Antoninus Liberalis, who describes her as saved by nymphs and becoming herself a hamadryad nymph.[41]

In Parthenius' poetic and prose versions, the resolution for Byblis is expressed in a radical and suggestive way: she ties a girdle to a tree, which implies the idea of union, as if she was trying to tie Caunus.[42] However, the knot will actually not bind anything, but on the contrary it will release her from life. Death is a definite form of departure. The location of her suicide by hanging from a tree is not specified in the prose version. The mention of the δρύος and the stream that will appear in the spot, though, suggests a place outside the city. In Parthenius' verses a location outside her house and the city is suggested by the comparison to a crying nightingale – maybe a reminiscence of Nicaenetus' version.

Regarding time, the term φερένδιος in Nicaenetus' fragment (line 12), obelised by Lightfoot and other commentators, is, in my opinion, satisfactorily explained by Giangrande (1982, 81-82). This term places the escape of Caunus in the hottest moment of the day, with clear light, which posed a problem to other editors since

[40] On the metamorphosis of Byblis see Forbes Irving 1990, 24, 31, 300; Buxton 2009, 199-200. Interestingly chapter 13 of Parthenius' mythographical work provides a parallel of a character, Harpalyce, involved in an incestuous passion which is transformed into a bird. On hamadryad nymphs see Larson 2001, 11 and 33.

[41] On Antoninus Liberalis see Celoria 1992 and Del Canto Nieto 2003.

[42] In erotic magic tying also plays a symbolic role.

broad daylight would make a stealthy escape more difficult. On the contrary, Giangrande reckons that escaping at noon, with bright light, would actually be the best way to hide, because in this moment everybody would be having the 'midday sleep', attested in several sources. On the other hand, I would like to point out that the apparent contradiction of hiding in the light fits nicely the Hellenistic poetics.[43] Besides, it contrasts with an element in the second version in prose (lines 17-18): Parthenius relates that Byblis confessed Caunus her love in a covert way by asking him not to look when she declared to him.[44] It is indeed logical that the notion of 'hiding' plays a role in the story of an illicit love. Remarkably, in Antoninus Liberalis' version, Byblis decides to commit suicide by night. The fact that daylight is associated to Caunus and night-time or hiding from sight are associated to Byblis, suggests a symbolic distribution in which each sibling occupies opposite extremes. Furthermore, in Antoninus' version day and night are also associated to hiding and escaping. In his narrative Caunus' departure plays no role at all and is not even mentioned, but the conflict revolves around Byblis. She is the one in love and she is depicted as trying to hide her feelings from her parents.[45] Antoninus' text continues saying ἐπεὶ δὲ καθ' ἡμέραν εἴχετο χαλεπωτέρῳ δαίμονι, νυκτὸς ἔγνω καταβαλεῖν ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ἑαυτήν, which is translated by Celoria (1992, 89) as "but daily she was being gripped by an even more unmanageable demon and one night she decided to throw herself from a rock." Besides the more frequent meaning of 'daily' chosen by

[43] See Durbec 2009, 21-24.

[44] μὴ περιδεῖν αὐτήν, line 18. Parthenius does not specify how she hides. Ovid also includes the detail of the declaration and resolves it by making her send a letter to her brother. The fact that their communication is indirect allows Byblis to hide from Caunus' sight. Ov. *Met*. 9.515-570.

[45] Ant. Lib. 30.3: καὶ τὸ πάθος ἄχρι μὴν ἐδύνατο κρύπτειν ἐλελήθει τοὺς γονεῖς.

the translator, the expression καθ' ἡμέραν can also mean "by day".[46] This would establish a contrast between the effort to hide the incestuous passion during the day, and the moment in which Byblis decides to commit suicide, νυκτὸς. Again, we find an association of hiding, light, darkness and separation.[47] Thus, the fact that different versions specify the precise moments in which departure or suicide take place, both movements of separation, suggests that their symbolic value associated to hiding and prohibition, are connected precisely with the split-up or union of the siblings.

In conclusion, Parthenius provides a multiple account where prose and poetry are intertwined within different reformulations of a story about a forbidden feeling, which affects both of the individuals involved in the incestuous passion, and not only the one who feels it. In all versions, the idea of distance and separation appears as the way to resolve the conflict created by the incestuous desire. Both siblings have to leave their home city, Miletus or Oecous, a city called "Home", which is opposed to both the countryside or a new land far away. Caunus leaves and travels to a remote place where he founds a new city. Biblys stays in the χώρα, but outside the οἶκος and outside the πόλις. Thus, she suffers also an exilium, though indoors. Her integration into the wilderness symbolises the fact that she will be permanently excluded from the civilised world. Therefore, the variant on who is in love with whom seems secondary. There is a constant playing with the notion of near and far, of inside and outside. Passionate love for a sibling is too close, distance needs to be imposed to protect the home and the city. Both Caunus' and Byblis' destinies are movements of separation

[46] Cf. Aesch. *Cho*. 818 where it is opposed to night: νυκτὸς προὐμμάτων σκότον φέρει, / καθ' ἡμέραν δ' οὐδὲν ἐμφανέστερος.

[47] Darkness is associated to incest in many myths see Seaford 1990, 76 and 83-84.

from the family. Death is the most extreme form of separation. On the contrary, exile is a separation with continuity through marriage and the foundation of a new city.

It could be surmised that the story warns about the dangers of prohibiting sibling marriage: the royal family would lose their heirs. However, as I argued above, the structure of the story following the foundation myths, the combination of the characterization of Caunus as a just man and his feelings as unwilling, Byblis' worries to hide during confession or to hide her feelings from her parents, reveal altogether a negative vision of a possible incestuous relation. On the other hand, Miletus, their father, who provides the link to the homonymous city, is not described as incestuous. In fact, Nicaenetus portraits him as a newcomer (προτέρωσε κιών, line 7 "faring further on") who obtained access to the power by marring a local woman, Tragasia, who is only mentioned here, and is said to be the daughter of a blurred Celaenus, which might be the eponym of the Κελαιναί, the territory in Phrygia (Lightfoot 1999, 438).

Seaford (1990, 76) showed that in tragic myth the imprisonment of women is symbolically associated with her relationship to the blood-kin. He analyses several tragic examples and concludes that captivity imposed by the father or by the family, a tentative to keep a girl within her blood-kin, symbolises the rejection of marriage, which implies the impossibility for girls to perpetuate life through marriage. At the same time, the girl escaping to the countryside, which symbolises a loss of control, has equally disastrous consequences.[48] Also the opposition between light and darkness play a role in myths related to incest. As a matter of fact, Byblis' myth seems to follow this symbolism. Caunus has to abandon his father land but he starts it

[48] Furthermore, a girl's escape to nature would hint at a Dionysiac dimension, for Dionysus is the God that liberates women and brings them together as maenads on the mountainside.

anew somewhere else by means of marriage, as explicated in Conon's version. Byblis will not marry, will not be integrated in the οἶκος nor in the polis, and will disappear from the civilised world. Thus, the ideas of incest, marriage and access to adulthood through marriage appear over and over again. Separation from the family is widely attested in marriage rituals. Sometimes there is even a symbolic death of the bride.[49] The erotic element and the age of the siblings, who are in some versions twins, also point to a marriage-related background. From a narrative point of view, the separation of Byblis and Caunus from their home is translating the danger of an excessively close kin relationship. Incest must be solved with its opposite element, that is, distance.

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[49] Burkert 1986, 62-63; Dowden 1989, 34-40.

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